

CAREER FOCUS

Special duty assignments— who approves them?

BY MASTER SGT.
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TEAM KIRTLAND
career assistance advisor

When it comes to the topic of approving authority for special duty assignments, it seems there's a good deal of confusion as to who really makes the final decision to approve or disapprove these challenging but extremely rewarding assignments.

There are many sharp, motivated Airmen, noncommissioned officers and senior noncommissioned officers who want to step up to the challenge of a special duty assignment. Too often these individuals give up pursuing their dream job when they encounter a false barrier.

It usually starts when I hear the member say, "My unit says we're undermanned, so I'm not being allowed to apply." Let's clear the air this week by answering a pointed question...

Q. "Who is the approving authority for Special Duty Assignments? I heard that Special Duty Assignments are a great way to gain experience—how do I apply, and who needs to be involved in the process?"

A. When we use the term Special Duty Assignment, we're referring to a broad range of Air Force Specialties in the 8X000 arena. There are over 50 unique opportunities, including professional military education instructor, recruiter, military training instructor, technical

training instructor, first sergeant, U.S. Air Force Honor Guard, Presidential Support Duty, enlisted aide, and many more! Although the application process for each job varies, one thing remains constant—the final approval authority always rests with the hiring activity and the Air Force Personnel Center.

Of course, applicants must meet established criteria (often outlined in the SPECAT—SPEcial CATegory—Guide, i.e., grade/skill-level/AQE scores, retainability, etc) and will likely have to accomplish or supply a variety of documents and forms (i.e., Air Force Form 22 - *Physical Profile*, Targeted Military Resume, formal application, etc.), but these requirements are easily completed in relatively little time.

One fairly standard requirement when applying for a special duty is the commander's recommendation, and this is the point where many individuals mistakenly halt their application process—let me explain.

This requirement is designed to allow commanders and first sergeants to pre-screen applicants to ensure only the highest caliber Airmen fill these important positions. Additionally, it allows unit leadership to voice any concerns regarding perceived manning shortages to the Air Force Personnel Center by encouraging their comments on the application form. Unfortunately, some individuals come away with the impression that "if the boss says we're undermanned, I may as well not bother applying." Nonsense, I say!

Remember that the Air Force Assignment Distribution System was developed to distribute personnel equitably among



Master Sgt. David Halvorson

commands, with further distribution to specific units done jointly by major command personnel staffs and the personnel center assignment noncommissioned officers. This means that all applications should be forwarded through proper channels and then on to the Air Force Personnel Center (for final approval or disapproval) in order to ensure each applicant is given the chance to be among those selected to serve in these highly selective specialties.

Bottom line? There's no one stopping you from pursuing your dream job—except you!

For more information call me at 846-6636 or make an appointment to visit with me. Or go online to review the SPECAT (SPEcial CATegory) Assignment Guide at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/procedures/specat.htm.

Outstanding opportunities await you—and they're just an application away!



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Command Chief's Choice



Senior Airman Luis Otero

is an F-16 Crew Chief with the New Mexico Air National Guard's 150th Fighter Wing. His responsibilities are to ensure the aircraft is mission ready at all times. This includes everything from major aircraft maintenance to launch and recovery operations.

What do you like best about this assignment?

The ability to learn the various systems on the F-16. I also enjoy the travel (temporary duties).

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy four-wheeling and building off road vehicles.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

At present I am working on my bachelor's degree. In 10 years I would like to be a pilot.

What is your main goal in life?

To live life to the fullest, enjoying every moment.

FORUM

kirtlandcc.forum@kirtland.af.mil, 846-4240

No pets allowed on Hardin Field

Why are pet owners allowed to unleash their dogs and let them "empty" on Hardin Field?

As you suspect, pet owners are not allowed to do this on Hardin Field. In fact, there are a number of rules our pet-owners must follow to keep all of TEAM KIRTLAND safe and healthy.

Pets must be vaccinated and registered with the base veterinarian each year. Pets are not allowed in and around dorms, places of duty or any services activities on Kirtland AFB.

Pets must be in the house, a fenced yard, on a leash or under other

physical control of the owner.

Pets may not be exercised on paths or tracks designated for human use.

To learn more, please see Kirtland AFB Instruction 31-205, Control of Animals, and the rules and regulations provided by Kirtland AFB Family Housing.

All of us have a duty to our fellow humans to take good care of our pets and follow these simple rules.

Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your

concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691

CE Help Desk, 846-8222

Commissary, 846-9586

Computer help, 846-5926

Energy wasting, 846-4633

Exchange Service, 266-9887

Family Services, 846-0741

Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639

Law Enforcement, 846-7926

Legal Services, 846-4217

Medical Clinic, 846-3406

Services Squadron, 846-1828

Write: 377 ABW/CC Forum
2000 Wyoming SE
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117



COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

COMMENTARY

Make child's first dental visit a positive event

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS COURTNEY CONNELL

377th Dental Squadron

Your children's first dental visit is just as important as their first words or steps.

Taking care of their teeth while they are young can help prevent problems from occurring later on in life.

Dentists provide preventive services such as fluoride treatments and sealants, which are painless and less costly than fillings, crowns and other treatments they may need.

Going to the dentist regularly can save time, money, and your child's teeth.

There are twenty primary teeth which start to appear around six months. The best time to start taking your child to the dentist is between the ages of 6-12 months. The earlier you go, the better chance the dentist has to prevent problems. Sadly, one in 10 children ages 5 to 11 has never visited the dentist.

Ideally children should visit the dentist every 6 months.

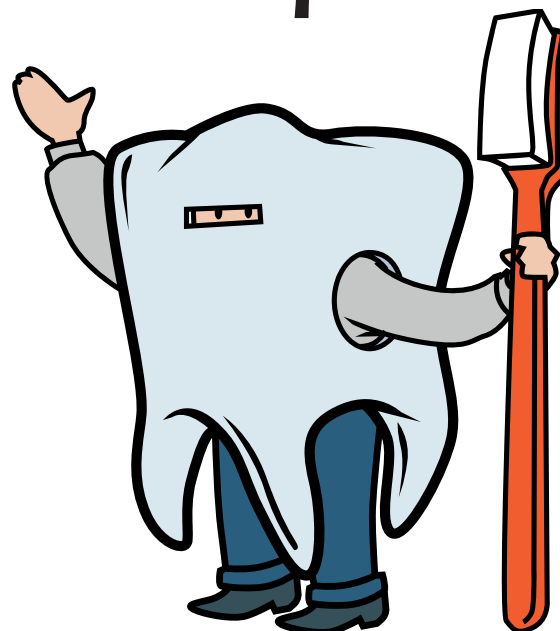
During the first dental visit, the dentist will examine your child's mouth, teeth and gums for any

sign of decay or other problems. The dentist may take x-rays to check whether the bones and teeth are developing properly and to check for hidden decay.

The dentist will teach you how to effectively clean your child's teeth at home and help parents manage childhood habits such as thumb sucking. The dentist will also discuss your child's fluoride needs.

A good time to schedule your child's visit is in the morning, when the child is rested and more cooperative. Properly prepared, your child's first visit to the dentist is a lot of fun.

There are some very positive things you can do to help your child be a life-long great dental patient. Start by setting a good example by caring for your teeth properly and make the visit enjoyable for your child.



It's best to avoid negative comments or scary images of dental treatment when talking to your child about their dental appointments. Children are curious and excited about this new adventure, unless someone they love and trust tells them a trip to the dentist won't be a fun trip.

If you're unsure how to prepare your child for their first dental visit, talk with the dental office, the staff will be glad to help you with this.

If your child enjoys their first dental visit, future visits will be positively anticipated rather than feared.

By starting dental visits at an early age and making them regularly, you can help your child avoid dental disease and enjoy strong, healthy teeth for a lifetime.